

Unit of Study: Poetry, Intermediate
Content Overview
Judy Leff

Unit length: 8 weeks

Introduction: In this unit of study students will learn to improve their writing in all genres by applying specific craft tools in the poetry genre.

A Few of My Favorite Poets:

Langston Hughes
Naomi Shihab Nye
William Carlos Williams

Gary Soto
Joy Harjo
Pablo Neruda

Mary Oliver
Arnold Adoff
Francisco X. Alarcon

Mentor Text: See Unit of Study

Week by Week Overview:

- Week 1: Find, read, share, recite, perform poems
- Week 2: What is poetry? /line breaks in poetry
- Week 3: Poetry as craft: Word choice and Repetition
- Week 4: Poetry as craft: Specific detail and Small Moments
- Week 5: Poetry as craft: Imagery*
- Week 6: Poetry as craft: Character
- Week 7: Poetry as craft: Grammar/Punctuation
- Week 8: Polish best piece(s) and publish

*Week 5 can be extended with additional work on figurative language in poetry.

See Figurative Language Handout at:

<http://wc2008.wikispaces.com/file/view/FigLangMT.pdf>

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Introduction:

This unit of study focuses on teaching students how to use language more effectively through poetry. The author's craft studied in this unit can be applied to all genres.

Week 1 – Focus: Immersion into the genre through sharing of poems and poets

Mini-lessons:

1. Mentor Text: Bring in some of your favorite poems, talk about your favorite poets and ask students to do the same.
2. Teacher shares How to Read a Poem Out Loud by Billy Collins handout (page 1) and models his recommended strategies for students.
3. Students read, share, recite, dramatize poems. Remember: Poetry is meant to be read out loud!
4. Students may choose their favorite poem to memorize and recite to class.

Week 2 – Focus question: What is poetry?

Mimi-lessons:

Poetry is hard to define so the teacher will present the concept of defining poetry through the eyes of poets by using the following Mentor Texts:

1. Poets on Poetry quotes (page 2) and/or selected, “poems on poetry” (pages 3- 8).
2. Do lots of brainstorming with students and keep a list of student responses to the question, “What is poetry?”
3. Using the above selections as mentor text, students will come up with their own definitions of poetry and/or write their own “What is poetry?” poems modeled on the mentor text poems.
3. Teachers look at this BBC site for an additional definition of poetry:

What is poetry?

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_4360000/newsid_4361100/4361125.stm

4. At Line Break Explorer:

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/lb_explorer/index.html

students will discover why and how poems are lined off.

Teachers, see the teacher resource page for this interactive site:

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/what-makes-poetry-exploring-88.html?tab=3#tabs>

5. After all students have completed the interactive lesson, conduct a class discussion on line breaks in poetry. Then go back to some of your Mentor Poems and discuss how and why they are lined off.

Weeks 3-7 – Focus: Specific poetry craft that improve writing across all genres

Mini-lessons:

1. Teacher will lead students in the process of Mentor Text Inquiry by charting the following 3 questions with students for each poem studied:
 - ♦ What is the poet doing?
 - ♦ Why is the poet doing it?
 - ♦ How can we use this craft in our own poems?
2. Teacher will target the identified craft for each poem, elaborate on that target craft, offer students strategies for writing a poem of their own, i.e., lift a line, write from a word, sketch and write, etc.

Students will:

1. Chart their responses to the 3 questions
2. Brainstorm emotions, memories, people, places that resonate with individual students as seed ideas for their own poems
3. Write a poem that utilizes each target craft
4. Experiment with the structure/form/topic of each poem
5. Use Peer Response Groups (PRG) to share ongoing drafts

List of Poems and Craft Lessons for Weeks 3-7

<p style="text-align: center;">Week 3</p> <p>Poetry as craft: Word choices (Verbs/Nouns) MT: Foul Shot - Edwin A. Hoey – Vivid Verbs (page 9) Student example of experimenting with craft for Foul Shot (pages 10-11) MT: Doing Dishes - Gary Soto – Specific Nouns (page 12) Student example of experimenting with craft for Doing Dishes (pages 13-18) Poetry as craft: Repetition MT: Remember - Joy Harjo (page 19) MT: I Am Offering This Poem - Jimmy Baca (page 20)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 4</p> <p>Poetry as craft: Specific detail MT: Daybreak in Alabama – L. Hughes (page 21) MT: Knoxville, Tennessee - Nikki Giovanni (page 22) Poetry as craft: Small moments MT: Early In The Morning - Li-Young Lee (page 23) AND small moments in previously presented poem</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 5</p> <p>Poetry as craft: Imagery MT: Girl Who Loved The Sky – Endrezzi (page 24) MT: Fog/Under the Harvest Moon – Sandburg (page 25) For more Figurative Language work with Mentor text check out this link: http://wc2008.wikispaces.com/file/view/FigLangMT.pdf</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 6</p> <p>Poetry as craft: Character MT: My Grandmother Is An Angel - Francisco Alarcon (page 26) MT: Neat Freak - Nikki Grimes (page 27)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Week 7</p> <p>Poetry as craft: Grammar MT: Mentor text poems above Review line breaking strategies</p>

Week 8 – Focus: Polish best piece(s) for publication

1. Complete poetry assessment checklist for final pieces (page 28)
2. Confer with students as they revise their pieces, offer mini-lessons as needed
3. Students revise, edit, confer with teacher and peers
4. Students choose format for publication of pieces

How To Read a Poem Out Loud

Listen to former Poet Laureate Billy Collins talk about reading a poem.

No doubt, most of the readers will be students with little or no experience in reading poetry out loud, especially to such a large group. And we know that a poem will live or die depending on how it is read. What follows, then, are a few pointers about the oral recitation of poetry. The readers, by the way, should not read cold; they should be given their poem a few days in advance so they will have time to practice, maybe in the presence of a teacher. In addition to exposing students to the sounds of contemporary poetry, **Poetry 180** can also serve as a way to improve students' abilities to communicate publicly. Here are a few basic tips:

1. Read the poem slowly. Most adolescents speak rapidly, and a nervous reader will tend to do the same in order to get the reading over with. Reading a poem slowly is the best way to ensure that the poem will be read clearly and understood by its listeners. Learning to read a poem slowly will not just make the poem easier to hear; it will underscore the importance in poetry of each and every word. A poem cannot be read too slowly, and a good way for a reader to set an easy pace is to pause for a few seconds between the title and the poem's first line.
2. Read in a normal, relaxed tone of voice. It is not necessary to give any of these poems a dramatic reading as if from a stage. The poems selected are mostly written in a natural, colloquial style and should be read that way. Let the words of the poem do the work. Just speak clearly and slowly.
3. Obviously, poems come in lines, but pausing at the end of every line will create a choppy effect and interrupt the flow of the poem's sense. Readers should pause only where there is punctuation, just as you would when reading prose, only more slowly.
4. Use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words and hard-to-pronounce words. To read with conviction, a reader needs to know at least the dictionary sense of every word. In some cases, a reader might want to write out a word phonetically as a reminder of how it should sound. It should be emphasized that learning to read a poem out loud is a way of coming to a full understanding of that poem, perhaps a better way than writing a paper on the subject.

~Poets on Poetry~

"Some writing is casual, but poetry is not. Poetry is saving, in the way that lives are saved-from the inside out." ~ Lucille Clifton

**" I love poetry. I mean, I love what the words can do. I love the language, the music that happens. I'm not going at this because I want something in particular to happen. I do it because I love what I can make with it."
~Joy Harjo**

"In writing poetry, all of the being's attention is focused on some inner voice....it really is a voice and all of the attention is turned toward that voice. That's such an exhilarating state to be in that it's addictive." ~Li-Young Lee

What Makes a Good Poem?

Love and care for elemental details, for chosen words and their simple arrangement on the page... and a way of ending that leaves a new resonance or a lit spark in the reader or listener's mind—that's part of it. ~ Naomi Shihab Nye

"Poetry is a life-cherishing force. And it requires a vision, a faith, to use an old fashioned term. Yes, indeed. For poems are not words, after all, but fires for the cold, ropes let down to the lost, something as necessary as bread in the pockets of the hungry. Yes, indeed." ~ Mary Oliver

"Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words." ~Robert Frost

"Poetry is an echo, asking a shadow to dance". ~Carl Sandburg

"Poetry is a great deal of joy and pain and wonder, with a dash of the dictionary." ~Kahlil Gibran

"Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in word." ~ Edgar Allan Poe

"Poetry is the art of creating imaginary gardens with real toads." ~Marianne Moore

**"Painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks."
~Plutarch**

Introduction to Poetry **by Billy Collins**

"Introduction to Poetry"

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its
hive

I say drop a mouse into a
poem
and watch him probe his
way out,

or walk inside the poem's
room
and feel the walls for a light
switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a
poem
waving at the author's name
on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair
with a rope
and torture a confession out
of it.

They begin beating it with a
hose
to find out what it really
means.

What's A Poem **by Charles** **Ghigna**

What's A Poem?

A whisper,
a shout,
thoughts turned
inside out.

A laugh,
a sigh,
an echo
passing by.

A rhythm,
a rhyme,
a moment
caught in time.

A moon,
a star,
a glimpse
of who you are.

--Charles Ghigna

One Blue Door

**To make a poem
listen: crow calls.
Rain paints a door,
blue in the sky.**

**To make a poem
you need the door
blue and lonely
swinging in the rain.**

**To make a poem
you need to leap
through that blue door
onto a crow.**

**To make a poem
you need to glide
on crow's black caw,
skimming the trees.**

**To make a poem
you need to taste
petals of rain.
Open your mouth.**

**To make a poem
you need to hear
fountains sprouting
in your hands.**

**Leap through one blue door
onto crow's black call.
Catch rain's petal-fall.
Music in your hands**

Leap through one blue door.

Pat Mora

"I," SAYS THE POEM

"I," says the poem arrogantly
 "I," am a cloud,
 I am a tree.

I am a city,
 I am the sea,
 I am a golden
 Mystery.

How can it be?

A poem is written
 by some someone,
 someone like you,
 or someone like me

who blows his nose,
 who breaks shoelaces,
 who hates and loves,
 who loses gloves,
 who eats, who weeps,
 who laughs, who sleeps,
 an ordinary he or she
 extraordinary as you or me

whose thoughts stretch high
 as clouds in the sky,

whose memories
 root deep as trees,

whose feelings choke
 like city smoke,

whose fears and joys in waves rebound
 like the ocean's tidal sound,

who daily solves a mystery:
 each hour is new, what will it be?

whose life unfolds its own golden key

"I," says the poem matter-of-factly.
 "I," am a cloud,
 I am a tree.

I am a city,
 I am the sea,

I am a golden
 Mystery.

But, adds the poem silently,
 I cannot speak until you come.
 Reader, come, come with me.

EVE MERRIAM

Inside a Poem

It doesn't always have to rhyme,
but there's the repeat of a beat, somewhere
an inner chime that makes you want to
tap your feet or swerve in a curve;
a lilt, a leap, a lightning-split:—
thunderstruck the consonants jut,
while the vowels open wide as waves in the noon-
blue sea.

Eve Merriam



Poems

A poem is a magical boat to ride
in a sea of words with a rhyming tide.
It takes us from some hum-drum shore
to places we never have been before—
shimmering islands of sensation
captured by imagination.
New lands wait for us to sight,
so climb aboard! The wind is right.
Rocking rhythms will take us along
to the rising crest of a noteless song.

Bobbi Katz

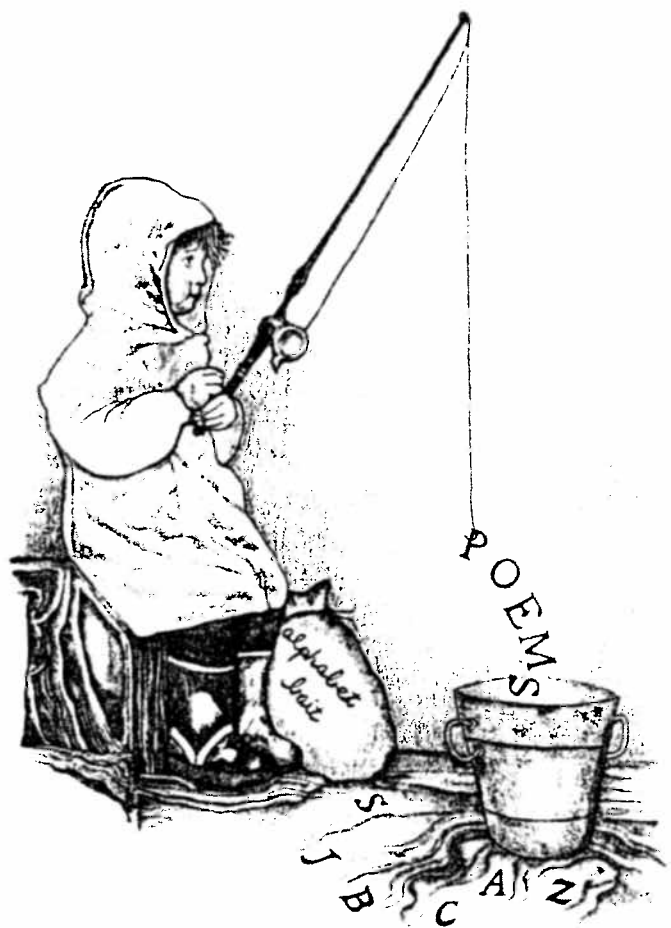
Poets Go Wishing

Poets go fishing
with buckets
of words,
fishing
and wishing.

Using a line
that's loose or
tight
(Maybe this time
a rhyme is
right.)

Unreeling
unreeling
the words till they
match
the feeling the poet is
trying to
catch.

Lilian Moore



FOUL SHOT

Edwin A. Hoey

With two 60's stuck on the scoreboard
 And two seconds hanging on the clock,
 The solemn boy in the center of eyes,
 Squeezed by silence,
 Seeks out the line with his feet,
 Soothes his hands along his uniform,
 Gently drums the ball against the floor,
 Then measures the waiting net,
 Raises the ball on his right hand,
 Balances it with his left,
 Calms it with fingertips,
 Breathes,
 Crouches,
 Waits,
 And then through a stretching of stillness,
 Nudges it upward.

The ball
 Slides up and out,
 Lands,
 Leans,
 Wobbles,
 Wavers,
 Hesitates,
 Exasperates,
 Plays it coy
 Until every face begs with unsounding screams—

And then

And then

And then,

Right before ROAR-UP,
 Dives down and through.

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Right before ROAR-UP,
Dives down and through.

With 10 minutes
 more, and two
 three's on the
 score board,
 Me, open,
 redy to get
 the hard blue
 ball, stuck in
 the middle
 of two girls
 of the other
 team, I seek
 the way out
 of there, As
 soon I get
 out of there
 they pass it
 to me, I
 dribble and
 dribble and
 dribble and

42 right before they blow the whistle

Interesting verbs

spilling	safer
fleeing	fucked
fixing	carried
baked	combed
exploding	catch
smashed	blinks
rotting	grabs
cut up	swarms
threw	scorched
littered	stomped
missing	convicted
tarred	acted
feathered	flew
punish	glowing
returning	pump
saving	sweat
worried	can
enlist	wail
loving	drain
paraded	docked
fight	

Doing Dishes

Gary Soto

Last night
 We had one pot
 And three dishes.
 Tonight, when it's my turn
 To throw my hands
 Into suds
 We have a stack
 Of plates
 The color of chickens,
 White and red.
 That's what we
 Had tonight—chicken *mole*,
 A messy meal
 That leaves stains
 On your mouth
 And greedy fingers.
 We have plates.
 We have six pots,
 A jangle of
 Forks and knives,
 And a wooden spoon
 That paddled
 Through sauce
 And docked on my lips

When Mom wasn't looking.
 We have a rolling pin
 Sticky with dough.
 We have a potato peeler
 And a pie pan
 Where the flan
 Set in its sweetness.
 We have drinking glasses.
 I pump the suds
 And scrub,
 My sponge raking
 The *mole* sauce,
 The *frijoles*,
 The *arroz*,
 The *papas*.
 The dishwater
 Turns orange,
 And suds flatten.
 I drain the water
 And start again,
 A curl of steam
 Licking my eyebrows.
 I wipe my eyebrow.
 I pump my sponge.
 I sweat over the suds
 And wail inside
 Because it's boring.

I could be doing
 Nothing right now,
 Or reading a magazine,
 Which is almost
 Like doing nothing.
 But I scrub and rinse,
 And am here
 Leaning my belly
 Against the sink
 For hours, days, years. . . .
 When I finally
 Pull my hands
 From the water,
 They're puckered and old
 —that's how long!

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And three dishes.
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The color of chickens,
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And scrub,
My sponge raking
The *mole* sauce,
The *frijoles*,
The *arroz*,
The *papas*.
The dishwasher
Turns orange,
And suds flatten.
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And start again,
A curl of steam
Licking my eyebrows.
I wipe my eyebrow.
I pump my sponge.
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—that's how long!

What do we Notice?

"Doing Dishes" By Gary Soto

• Poem

• Every line starts with a capital

★ He says a lot about a little thing

• Showing not telling - details

• Each line has 2-5 words no more

• We have, We have ... → ... makes the reader feel his sooooo much!

★ Specific details pot, dishes, stack of plates, 6 pots, jangle of forks and knives, wooden spoon, rolling pin, potatoe peeler, pie pan, drinking glasses

• exaggerates - hours, days, years

★ Specific nouns

Ordinary activities that we do

- Doing a ÷ problem
- Make your bed
- Walk or skipping
- ~~Skateboarding~~
- ~~Four square~~
- Wake up in Morning
- Brush teeth
- Getting dressed
- Comb your hair
- Floss your team
- Take out the trash
- Play Monopoly
- Taking a shower or bath
- Eat breakfast
- Put shoes on

Put shoes on

★ tying laces

★ crunched

★ knotted

★ pushing

★ pulling

★ fitting

★ tripping

Skipping

★ tripping

★ singing

jumping

★ fall

★ hit

★ crash

★ cry

humming

HW: Shoes On

17

Gosh darn it
Not again!
My feet will
Not go in my shoes!
My toes are crunched
At the top and my
heel will not go

In.

Yesterday my mom
tied my brothers laces.
I went to get

Another pair but

The laces were
Knotted together!

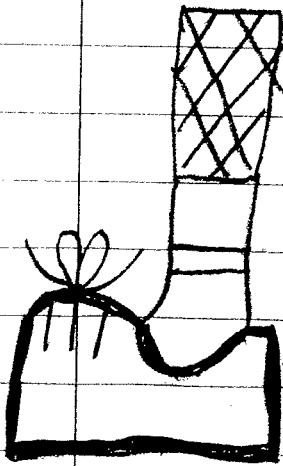
I get another
pair that are

2 sizes too small!

I take 1 step

I trip and pull

On a pole. Pushing
myself I realize
that the shoes
don't fit anymore.

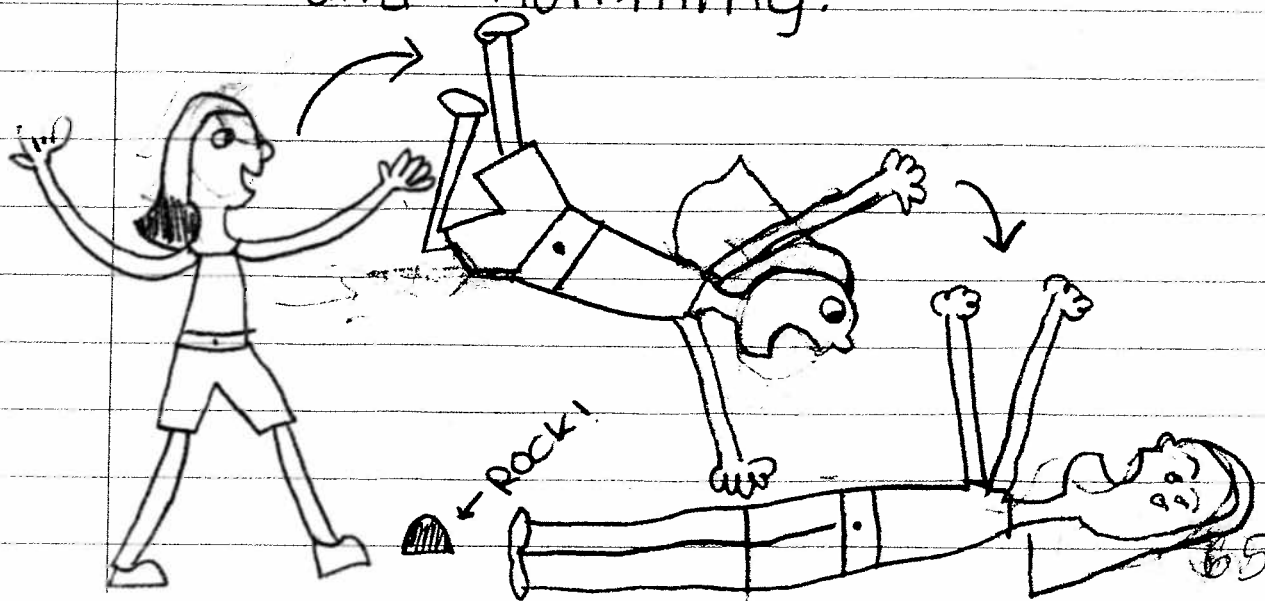


Skipping

18

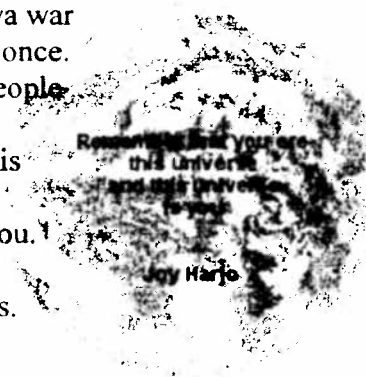
Jolly, Jolly, Jolly
The wind in my
Hair. Skipping and
Singing down the
Street. Oh no
A rock! I trip,
Then crash, I
fall and hit
my poor
little head.

Then you know
what happens after that.
I cry and cry,
Then I get back up
and start jumping
and humming.



Remember
by Joy Harjo

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.
Remember the moon, know who she is. I met her
in a bar once in Iowa City.
Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.
Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother's, and hers.
Remember your father. He is your life, also.
Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.
Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.
Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe. I heard her singing Kiowa war
dance songs at the corner of Fourth and Central once.
Remember that you are all people and that all people
are you.
Remember that you are this universe and that this
universe is you.
Remember that all is in motion, is growing, is you.
Remember that language comes from this.
Remember the dance that language is, that life is.
Remember.



Joy Harjo.....

" I love poetry. I mean, I love what the words can do. I love the language, the music that happens. I'm not going at this because I want something in particular to happen. I do it because I love what I can make with it. "

Joy Harjo was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1951. She is an award-winning poet and singer of the Mvskoke/Creek Nation. She has published acclaimed books of poetry and sings and plays tenor saxophone with her group, *Poetic Justice*. With a master's of fine arts degree from the University of Iowa, Harjo has taught at several universities in Arizona, New Mexico and California.

Repetition

"Oh, I love language. I love language. Language, to me, is what sunrise is to the birds. Language, to me, is what water is to a man that just crossed the desert."



Jimmy Santiago Baca

Jimmy Santiago Baca was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1952. Abandoned by his parents at the age of two, he lived with one of his grandparents for several years before being placed in an orphanage. He wound up living on the streets, and at the age of twenty-one he was convicted on charges of drug possession and incarcerated. He served six years in prison, four of them in isolation. During this time, Baca taught himself to read and write, and he began to compose poetry. A fellow inmate convinced him to submit some of his poems to

Mother Jones magazine, then edited by Denise Levertov. Levertov printed Baca's poems and began corresponding with him, eventually finding a publisher for his first book.

I Am Offering This Poem by Jimmy Santiago Baca

I am offering this poem to you,
since I have nothing else to give.
Keep it like a warm coat,
when winter comes to cover you,
or like a pair of thick socks
the cold cannot bite through,

I love you,

I have nothing else to give you,
so it is a pot full of yellow corn
to warm your belly in the winter,
it is a scarf for your head, to wear
over your hair, to tie up around your face,

I love you,

Keep it, treasure it as you would
if you were lost, needing direction,
in the wilderness life becomes when mature,
and in the corner of your drawer,
tucked away like a cabin or a hogan
in dense trees, come knocking,
and I will answer, give you directions,
and let you warm yourself by this fire,
rest by this fire, and make you feel safe,

I love you,

It's all I have to give,
and it's all anyone needs to live,
and to go on living inside,
when the world outside
no longer cares if you live or die;
remember,

I love you.

Repetition



Langston Hughes

James Langston Hughes was born February 1, 1902, in Joplin, Missouri. His parents divorced when he was a small child, and his father moved to Mexico. He was raised by his grandmother until he was thirteen, when he moved to Lincoln, Illinois, to live with his mother and her husband, before the family eventually settled in Cleveland, Ohio. It was in Lincoln, Illinois, that Hughes began writing poetry. Following graduation, he spent a year in Mexico and a year at Columbia University.

During these years, he held odd jobs as an assistant cook, launderer, and a busboy, and traveled to Africa and Europe working as a seaman. In November 1924, he moved to Washington, D.C. Hughes's first book of poetry, *The Weary Blues*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1926. He finished his college education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania three years later.

Daybreak in Alabama

by Langston Hughes

When I get to be a composer
 I'm gonna write me some music about
 Daybreak in Alabama
 And I'm gonna put the purtiest songs in it
 Rising out of the ground like a swamp mist
 And falling out of heaven like soft dew.
 I'm gonna put some tall tall trees in it
 And the scent of pine needles
 And the smell of red clay after rain
 And long red necks
 And poppy colored faces
 And big brown arms
 And the field daisy eyes
 Of black and white black white black people
 And I'm gonna put white hands
 And black hands and brown and yellow hands
 And red clay earth hands in it
 Touching everybody with kind fingers
 And touching each other natural as dew
 In that dawn of music when I
 Get to be a composer
 And write about daybreak
 In Alabama

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

I always like summer
best
you can eat fresh corn
from daddy's garden
and okra
and greens
and cabbage
and lots of
barbecue
and buttermilk
and homemade ice-cream
at the church picnic
and listen to
gospel music
outside
at the church
homecoming
and go to the mountains with
your grandmother
and go barefooted
and be warm
all the time
not only when you go to bed
and sleep.

Nikki Giovanni

Detail

Early in the Morning
by Li-Young Lee

While the long grain is softening
in the water, gurgling
over a low stove flame, before
the salted Winter Vegetable is sliced
for breakfast, before the birds,
my mother glides an ivory comb
through her hair, heavy
and black as calligrapher's ink.

She sits at the foot of the bed.
My father watches, listens for
the music of comb
against hair.

My mother combs,
pulls her hair back
tight, rolls it
around two fingers, pins it
in a bun to the back of her head.
For half a hundred years she has done this.
My father likes to see it like this.
He says it is kempt.

But I know
it is because of the way
my mother's hair falls
when he pulls the pins out.
Easily, like the curtains
when they untie them in the evening.

The Girl Who Loved the Sky

Outside the second grade room,
 the jacaranda tree blossomed
 into purple lanterns, the papery petals
 drifted, darkening the windows.
 Inside, the room smelled like glue.
 The desks were made of yellowed wood,
 the tops littered with eraser rubbings,
 rulers, and big fat pencils.
 Colored chalk meant special days.
 The walls were covered with precise
 bright tulips and charts with shiny stars
 by certain names. There, I learned
 how to make butter by shaking a jar
 until the pale cream clotted
 into one sweet mass. There, I learned
 that numbers were fractious beasts
 with dens like dim zeros. And there,
 I met a blind girl who thought the sky
 tasted like cold metal when it rained
 and whose eyes were always covered
 with the bruised petals of her lids.

She loved the formless sky, defined
 only by sounds, or the cool umbrellas
 of clouds. On hot, still days
 we listened to the sky falling
 like chalk dust. We heard the noon
 whistle of the pig-mash factory,
 smelled the sourness of home-bound men.
 I had no father; she had no eyes;
 we were best friends. The other girls
 drew shaky hop-scotch squares
 on the dusty asphalt, talked about
 pajama parties, weekend cook-outs,
 and parents who bought sleek-finned cars.

Alone, we sat in the canvas swings,
 our shoes, digging into the sand, then pushing.
 until we flew high over their heads,
 our hands streaked with red rust
 from the chains that kept us safe.

I was born blind, she said, an act of nature.
 Sure, I thought, like birds born
 without wings, trees without roots.
 I didn't understand. The day she moved
 I saw the world clearly; the sky
 backed away from me like a departing father.
 I sat under the jacaranda, catching
 the petals in my palm, enclosing them
 until my fist was another lantern
 hiding a small and bitter flame.

Anita Endrezze (1952-)
 Yaqui Poet

UNDER THE HARVEST MOON

Carl Sandburg

**UNDER the harvest moon,
When the soft silver
Drips shimmering
Over the garden nights,
Death, the gray mocker,
Comes and whispers to you
As a beautiful friend
Who remembers.**

**Under the summer roses
When the flagrant crimson
Lurks in the dusk
Of the wild red leaves,
Love, with little hands,
Comes and touches you
With a thousand memories,
And asks you
Beautiful, unanswerable questions.**

FOG

Carl Sandburg

**THE fog comes
on little cat feet.**

**It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.**

My Grandma Is an Angel

26

I learned
Spanish from
my grandma

"mijito
don't cry"
she'd tell me

when
my parents
would leave

to work
at the fish
canneries

and I'd fall asleep
in her arms
once again

when she'd say
"chubby boy"
she'd laugh

with my grandma
I learned
to count clouds

to recognize
mint leaves
in flowerpots

my grandma
wore moons
on her dress

Mexico's mountains
deserts
ocean

in her eyes
her braids
her voice

I'd see them
touch them
smell them

one day
I was told
"she went far away"

but still
I feel her
next to me

whispering
in my ear:
"my little son"

Mi abuela es un ángel

el español
de mi abuela
lo aprendí

"mijito
no llores"
me decía

cuando
mis padres
salían

a trabajar
en las canerías
de pescado

y otra vez
en sus brazos
me dormía

cuando decía
"niño barrigón"
se reía

con mi abuela
aprendí
a contar nubes

a reconocer
en las macetas
la yerbabuena

mi abuela
llevaba lunas
en el vestido

la montaña
el desierto
el mar de México

en sus ojos
en sus trenzas
en su voz

yo los veía
los tocaba
los olía

un día
me dijeron
"se fue muy lejos"

pero todavía
yo la siento
conmigo

diciéndome
quedito al oído:
"mijito"

Neat Freak

Vikki Grimes

My room
Is a jigsaw puzzle
Of clothes and books
And dust-bunnies with
Babies of their own,
Which is why I lock
My bedroom door
When Grandma Mac
Comes around.
She can't abide
Dirt or clutter.
Dust leaves its
Calling card
At her front door,
Afraid to enter.
Her floors are raw
From scrubbing.
Her trash basket
Is hungry for scraps.

Even her kitchen sink
Sometimes wishes
It could keep a stack
Of dirty dishes
Overnight.
There's little chance
Of that, though,
'Cause Grandma Mac
Is a neat freak
And proud of it.

Poetry Checklist

Name _____	yes no	Supporting evidence
Does it create images? (pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, touching sensations)	yes no	
Does it sing to you? Does it make music to your reader's ear?	yes no	
Does it look with poets' eyes and see an ordinary thing in a fresh, new way?	yes no	
Does the poem touch people emotionally?	yes no	
Is it creative with language? Use language and words in interesting ways?	yes no	
Are words used in a highly powerful manner? Is there a lot of zap with few words?	yes no	
Does it show clear signs of revision?	yes no	
Does it incorporate the strategies of the mentor text craft we studied?	yes no	
Does it experiment with line breaks?	yes no	
Has it been checked for spelling, punctuation?	yes no	
Is the format appealing to the eye?	yes no	